

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Special Meeting
August 31, 2007
Fish and Game Headquarters
Boise, Idaho**

A special meeting of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission was held by telephone conference. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cameron Wheeler at 8:00 a.m. with Commissioners Wright, McDermott, Power, and Trevey participating.

Present in the Director's office were Director Groen, Dallas Burkhalter, Deputy Attorney General; Virgil Moore, Deputy Director; Jim Unsworth, Chief, Bureau of Wildlife; Mary Boyer, Executive Assistant; Tom Hemker, Wildlife Program Coordinator; Mary Dudley, Volunteer Coordinator; Jeff Gould, Wildlife Game Manager and Mike Keckler, Chief, Communications.

Director Groen reported that purpose of the call is to approve Commission meeting minutes, emergency rule modifications for elk and bighorn sheep in the Selway Zone, and a report on sage grouse.

CONSENT CALENDAR

07-83 Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner McDermott seconded a motion TO ADOPT THE JANUARY 16, JANUARY 25, JANUARY 31, FEBRUARY 7, FEBRUARY 15, FEBRUARY 22, AND MARCH 1, 2007 MINUTES WITH THE EXCEPTION TO REPLACE THE WORD WHICH TO WITH ON PAGE 29 REGARDING SB 1027 FOR FEBRUARY 7 MINUTES. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Director Groen briefed the Commission concerning the delay in transcribing and posting of the Commission meeting minutes. Due to the increased number of Commission meetings at the last part of the year, legislative conference calls, the complexity and detail required from the past minutes, along with the transitioning of a new staff in the Director's office have led to this delay. Aggressive steps have been taken to remedy this situation, such as, new technology to record and reproduce copies of the oral presentations. Additionally, Director Groen stated that action items from each Commission meeting in the future will be captured in a news release, posted on the Department website and sent out internally to Department Staff.

RULES

Jim Unsworth, Chief, Bureau of Wildlife, presented the Department's recommendations for emergency modifications to elk and bighorn sheep seasons. Mr. Unsworth noted that fire and associated fire closures during 2007 are more numerous and larger than normal. The potential exists to affect hunters' ability to access some early season elk and bighorn

sheep hunts. Specifically, some elk and bighorn sheep hunt areas within the Selway and Middle Fork wilderness areas are currently closed to human entry. It is unknown when fires will subside and when fire closures be lifted. Staff will recommend emergency changes to a few elk and bighorn sheep hunts to provide hunters with additional flexibility to participate in 2007 hunts.

Department Recommendation 2007 Seasons

Elk

SELWAY ZONE (Units 16A, 17, 19, 20)				
	September	October	November	December
A Tag		ANY WEAPON – antlered ONLY Oct 1 – <i>Nov 18</i>		
B Tag	ANY WEAPON – antlered ONLY <i>Sep 15 – Nov 18</i>			

Note: Status of elk zone caps as of 8/29/07:

- nonresident 'B' tags: 0 remaining of 336 total
- resident 'B' tags: 200 remaining of 563 total (anticipated to sell out)

MIDDLE FORK ZONE (Units 20A, 26, 27)				
	September	October	November	December
A Tag		ANY WEAPON – Oct 1 – <u>Nov 18</u> Units 20A, 26 – any elk Unit 27 – antlerless or brow-tined bulls ONLY		
B Tag	ANY WEAPON – <u>Sep 15 – Nov 18</u> Units 20A, 26 – antlered ONLY Unit 27 – brow-tined or larger bulls ONLY			

Note: Status of elk zone caps as of 8/29/07:

- nonresident 'A' tags: 0 remaining of 174 total
- resident 'A' tags: 1,076 remaining of 1,168 total (anticipated to not sell out)
- nonresident 'B' tags: 0 remaining of 267 total
- resident 'B' tags: 749 remaining of 925 total (anticipated to not sell out)

Note: Status of nonresident elk tags as of 8/29/07:

- 2,793 remaining of 10,415 total

Bighorn Sheep

Hunt No.	Hunt Area	Permits	Proposed Season Dates
5002	19	6	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5003	20-1	2	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5004	20-2	2	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5005	20A	2	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5007	26	4	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5008	27-1	8	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5009	27-2	6	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5010	27-3	4	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>

5011	27-4	3	Aug 30 – <u>Oct 31</u>
5019	17L	1	<u>Aug 30</u> – Oct 31
5020	26L	2	<u>Aug 30</u> – Oct 31
5021	27L	2	<u>Aug 30</u> – Oct 31

07-84 Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner McDermott seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EMERGENCY MODIFICATIONS FOR ELK AND BIGHORN SHEEP SEASONS IN THE SELWAY AND MIDDLE FORK ZONES. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

REPORT

Sage-grouse Update

Tom Hemker, Wildlife Program Coordinator, provided an update to the Commission on sage-grouse. Mr. Hemker noted that sage-grouse is being monitored statewide and there are unusual declines in the 2007 breeding ground counts of sage-grouse in the Magic Valley north of the Snake River. The 2007 counts were 55 % below the 2002-2006 five – year average. In addition, the Murphy Complex Fire burned over 460,000 acres in Idaho including important sage-grouse habitat in eastern Owyhee County. By order of the Director, the 2007 sage-grouse season will be closed in Owyhee County east of the Bruneau River. Also, the 2007 sage-grouse season in all open areas in Elmore, Camas, Jerome, Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Blaine counties will be 7 days long with a daily bag limit of 1 bird with 2 birds in possession after the first day. Seasons in the rest of the state are unchanged from those published in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Upland Game and Furbearer Seasons and Rules brochure.

MISCELLANEOUS

Adjournment

The Commission meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Cameron Wheeler
Chairman

Cal Groen
Secretary